1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

a fearful pride, but soon lose their fear, and try to crowd into the seats; their women, however, are as reluctant to risk entering a car as any old village woman in Cornwall thirty-five years ago. It was a pleasure later in the day to see the bold adventurers of the morning who watched the white man's toilet operations conducting parties of sight-seers into the tent and pantomiming the use of brush, razor and everything there. The Bison-horn Maria is more sophisticated, and will not intrude without being asked, nor is he so curious about small things; but a motor-car is as great a draw to him as to the hill men. Both are very interested in seeing a carburettor stripped and assembled or a tyre changed, or any mechanical repairs; they show quick intelligence, and could soon be taught. In the spate of bridge building on the State roads in recent years they have been quick to grasp methods of sinking piles or getting great beams into position, and have not been slow to offer suggestions that have sometimes been practicable. The newly built road bridge over the Indrawati at Jagdalpur is really built according to the same method as the bridges which even Hill Marias construct across their rivers, with modern and stronger materials and other improvements.

My inquisitiveness about their houses, habits, possessions, agriculture and customs in their eyes must seem much like their curiosity about my ways. Actually their mental processes are not unlike ours, when allowance is made for their centuries of isolation; they are certainly more receptive than the ordinary villager of British India, whose thought has for generations been stunted by the cumbrous wrappings of caste and debased Hinduism. A striking instance of this is the comparative ease with which vaccination was made compulsory years ago throughout the State and is welcomed by the Marias, in strong contrast to the keen opposition to it even in the cities of British India and to the caution venturing on timidity with which provincial Governments make tentative advances in the direction of universal compulsion. Not only is vaccination really universal even in the hill villages, but the Marias are keenly alive to the advantages of inoculation for cholera and yaws, and, in fact, are inclined to demand '*tika*' or inoculation for every ailment, those of them, that is, who have seen for themselves cholera checked or yaws cured by injections; for till recently no medical relief other than vaccination had reached the hills.

In natural cheerfulness few races can surpass the Hill Marias, who, like all Gonds, are quick to see the fun of things, whether it be something that spontaneously appeals to their sense of humour, or a joke put to them by some outsider. Their humour is apt to be broad. Very few serious disputes arise in Abujhmar, where a

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

natural than for the backward Marias aspiring to raise themselves to Raj-Gond status to copy gradually the Raj-Gond social organization? It is equally possible that *pari passu* the Raj-Gond ruler and nobles encouraged this: in all these semi-feudal, semi-tribal states and sub-states, as to this day in the States and zamindaris of Chhattisgarh and Orissa, the Maharajah of the State or the Rajah of the zamindari remains the final arbiter in caste matters, even often conferring the right to wear the sacred thread on communities actively hinduizing themselves. At Surjagarh and Jarawandi camps, various *Sendhias* and headmen practically admitted to me that god-grouping was not originally a Maria institution.[1]

From Lahiri there was a long climb of thirteen miles to the Hill Maria village of Kuvakodi, where we halted for four days, including Christmas Day. The track led at first up the valley of the Lahiri river, then up the side valley of a small tributary, and so by an exceptionally steep ascent on to an undulating plateau, across which we reached Kuvakodi at dusk, our camp equipment all being carried on poles by Marias, whom on arrival we rewarded not only in cash but, in Bastar fashion, with salt and beads, and a feast of pork: the Marias sat ranged by clan and village, and those who killed and cooked the pork distributed to every man and child, and to the women of Kuvakodi, a portion of the meat off each joint of the pig. On the way up a slight detour took us through the small village of Gudumundi, and from Kuvakodi we visited Podewara and the Bastar village of Nelangari, some five miles from our camp.

Each day started with a parade of yaws patients for inoculation, all from Chanda villages: the Bastar Marias, who came in to see me and to join in the dancing each evening, looked tolerantly on, having themselves long before had the benefit of the Bastar anti-yaws parties.

The whole cultivation system of the Chanda Hill Marias is identical with the Bastar system described in Chapter VII of this book: it is, that is to say, *penda* cultivation and not what is generally known in the Central Provinces as *dahi*, or its Chanda plains variations of *khamori*, *jalapod*, *podu* or *sampod* (these terms will be explained later in this Note). There is the same broadcast sowing on the same kind of clearings of seed of all the minor millets and beans. The

[1] Hämmendorf in reviewing Shamrao Hivale's *The Pardhans of the Upper Narbada Valley* has pointed out that the fact that the Pardhans' clan organization is everywhere based on that of the local Gond, does not disprove the different origin of the two peoples, for there are many examples of other tribes adopting their Gond neighbours' system of phratries and clans. He instances from Chanda district and Hyderabad State not only the aboriginal castes as certain Maratha blacksmiths and brass-workers who have the same clan names as the Gonds, *Man in India*, Vol. XXVI, 1946, p. 231. Compare also the Kurak fishing tribe in Bastar, pp. 163-4.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

the eggs go bad, the priest plucks the feathers of the hen and puts them with the eggs. Broken egg-shells (which are usually preserved on bits of stick and kept under the roof) are added and all are taken to a cross-road. The priest cries, '*Thu thu*, you wanted to injure my hen. Take this and go away'. After this, the hen grows new feathers and the next lot of eggs will be good.

In the north-west of the State, the son of the village Gaita has a position of privilege in the ghotul and is often appointed its leader, but in the rest of the State the boys of the priestly families have no special privileges and can claim no special office; they are treated exactly the same as any other boys. But the Gaita's and Siraha's sons begin their training as priests or mediums while they are still boys, and many chelik have the power of falling into trance and prophesying. In Masora I saw chelik being taught how to bathe the gods and carry them about. In Koilibera I watched the Gaita teaching two of the chelik how to sacrifice chickens and offer egg-shells to the gods at the end of the Pus Kolang expedition. Parents often take their sons to special festivals so that they can learn what to do by imitation. The chelik usually attend ceremonies as acolytes and prepare the sacrificial food, wash the vessels, and make ready the sacrificial hearth. In this way the future Gaita or Pujari learns his business. The function of Siraha or Gunia is not always hereditary, but boys are chosen and trained when it is found that they are of an unusually sensitive temperament.

VII. White and Black Magic

Hitherto we have been dealing with Muria religion mainly in its relation to the gods; we must now take a brief glance at its prophylactic and protective measures on behalf of man against his natural and ghostly enemies. Chelik and motiari are protected against black magic by the divine power of the ghotul fence, but they are only safe while they are inside the ghotul. Evil powers cannot enter the building, but they camp all round, and the Muria boy and girl grow up in an atmosphere of battle in the unseen world.

Black magic entered the world through an insufficiency. Bhagavan had seven daughters. He had prepared flour with which to create man, but his daughters stole and ate a little from some of the heaps of flour. In these there was thus not enough material for them to become real human beings and they became magicians and witches. Because of their lack of flesh and blood, they try to steal flesh and drink the blood of men. The warlock and witch are thus sub-human, not fully created. In the untouched Muria tradition, the enemy of mankind is usually a man; belief in female witches and the evil eye of woman is generally a later and Hindu accretion to the old beliefs.

The story comes from Karikhodra. In it we see that the warlock and witch are sub-human, not fully created. In other stories witchcraft originates in disobedience and cannibalism. In Matawal in the Mardapal Pargana we were told the following tale:

> A Muria and his sister left their parents' house and went out to seek for work. After a time they returned home and wished to make an offering to Mother Earth. They went to the shrine of the goddess and the boy said to his sister, 'Whatever you do, do not eat any of the flesh sacrificed here'. They found that the Gaita had put some flesh on a saja leaf in the name of the goddess before her shrine. As they approached a crow flew down, ate some of the flesh and scattered the rest. The boy picked it up and put it back again on the leaf. Behind the shrine a lot of blood from the animals offered and sacrificed had

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

754 that his wife did not bear him a child, he went to the Waddai who discovered the real reason, performed the proper rites and soon a large family came into being.

754 Witches can injure women by prolonging their menstrual
755 periods. The Siraha can counter this by offering sacrifices
841 to the Dead and to the Mirchuk. In Kameli a woman who was suffering from mennhorragia was cured by this means.
[762] But sometimes the Siraha can do nothing, and in despair the unhappy woman may hang herself.

754 At Borgum I was told that only widows can perform black magic and that they usually call on the ghosts of the dead to help them in their wicked deeds. Here they gave me an interesting account of how a witch can take precautions against discovery. She takes her familiar, say the ghost of a murderer or suicide, with her to an ant-hill and there she 'binds its mouth' by removing some of the earth from the hill and uttering charms. She says to the ghost, 'When the Siraha questions you, do not disclose my name'. Then she replaces the earth. It is believed that, just as any earth that is removed from an ant-hill is automatically filled up the next day, so misfortune will enter the house of the ghost she has bound if it betrays her.

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Charm against disease, made of small bits of chicken-bone.

Dread of this witchcraft or enchantment is a very powerful factor driving men to violence, for the fear is still a live one and the dangers are supposed to be great. Guma Hunga left his home and village because he believed that his family was being bewitched by a man called Burgi. A year afterwards he saw his enemy in the new village to which he had moved, and murdered him in a sudden access